

The invention comprises a method for removing a small layer of copper from copper features forming part of a printed circuit board by using etchants, many of which have been used before, but not without removing large quantities of copper. The copper is selectively removed in the present invention by applying an inorganic acid etchant, persulfate and phosphate salts.

The invention was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over FERRIER et al in view of DUTKEWYCH et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons:

The Office makes the argument that there is no limitation in the claims eschewing the use of nitric acid. Applicants cannot add this limitation, because it would amount to a negative limitation in the claim, which is against PTO rules.

However, the claims of any application must be interpreted with respect to the meaning of the specification. Applicants' specification clearly states that nitric acid would remove too much copper, and should not be used. Applicants assume that the cited reference to JP5-148,658 would remove too much copper by its use of nitric acid. Therefore, Applicants respectfully believe that they define

over the rejection to JP5,148,658, under 35 U.S.C. §§102(b) and 103(a).

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request that claims 1 through 20 be allowed and that the application be passed to issue.

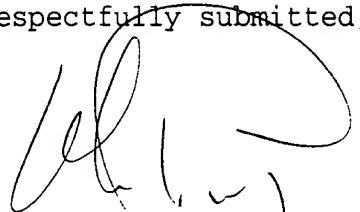
Respectfully submitted,

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